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GROWERS' PLANS FOR CROP ACREAGE IN 1959

On March 1, farmers intended to plant 272 million acres to the 16 major spring crops, which in recent years have accounted for about 80 percent of the crop total in the Nation. This would be nearly 4 million acres more than in 1958, but otherwise the smallest acreage since 1953.

Considering other crops—winter wheat, cotton, and comparatively small acreages of a number of minor field, seed, and vegetable crops—it looks as though farmers are going to plant nearly 8½ million acres more than last year.

Total acreage of crops planted or grown in 1959 now looks to be about 339 million acres. This is 2 percent above the low levels of the past 2 years, but otherwise the smallest national total in comparable records back to at least 1917.

These acreage figures are based on replies from thousands of farmers throughout the country. Full details may be found in the Crop Reporting Board's annual March Intentions Report. This report, started in the early 1920's, has proven an excellent early season guide as to what farmers are likely to plant.

Many factors may, however, change farmers' plans. Weather, disease, prices, and even the report itself—by indicating what other farmers intend to do—may play a part in causing shifts from early season plans.

Turn the page for a look at prospects for some specific commodities.

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Corn

Farmers plan to plant over 9 million acres more than last year, the largest planted acreage since 1949. Planting intentions are above last year's acreage in nearly all States except in the Mid-south. The sharpest increases are in the Corn Belt where farmers apparently see more cash appeal in corn than in competing crops like oats, hay, soybeans, and sorghums.

Wheat

Growers planned to increase spring wheat plantings by nearly 9 percent. Durum wheat plantings are expected to be more than a third larger than the record low acreage planted last year. The planned acreage of other spring wheat is 6 percent higher than last year's plantings, but only three-fourths the average, and the fourth smallest of record. Adding the winter wheat acreage, estimated in December 1958, to the planned spring wheat seedings indicates an all-wheat acreage of 58.5 million, 2 million acres more than in 1958.

Barley

Farmers planned a 5-percent increase in acreage. Larger plantings are fairly general in all sections except the North Atlantic region and States in the Ohio and middle Mississippi River Valleys.

Sorghum

Growers plan to decrease plantings by 3 percent. The largest sorghum-producing States—Texas and Kansas—plan small increases, but substantial decreases were indicated in the major corn-producing States.

Oats

Farmers planned to reduce acreage 6 percent to the lowest planted acreage of records reaching back to 1926. A downward trend in recent years, along with planned increases in corn plantings, is mainly responsible for the lowered planting intentions. Oats acreage is expected to be lower in 1959 in all States except where 1958 plantings were restricted by unfavorable weather at seeding time.

Soybeans

After 9 years of successive acreage expansion, a drop of 7 percent from last year's record high is expected this year. Decreased acreage is indicated for all States in the North Central area, but southern States plan moderate expansion.

Rice

Growers expect to seed about 11 percent more acreage than in 1958. State allotments are practically the same as last year and the planned increases in acreage largely reflect the extent of participation in the Acreage Reserve Program in 1958.

Flaxseed

Growers planned to reduce plantings 8 percent from last year for the smallest acreage since 1952.

Tobacco

Acreage may be 7 percent higher than last year when the smallest acreage in nearly half a century was harvested.

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Other Crops

An increase of 1 percent is expected in the acreage of dry beans. Acreage of dry peas is expected to increase nearly one-third following last year's good yields and prices.

Farmers expect to cut 2½ million acres less of hay than last year for the lowest acreage since 1939. Prospective reduction in the Corn Belt amounts to nearly 2 million of the total 2½ million decline.

Peanut acreage is expected to be 3 percent lower than last year. A slight increase was expected in acres planted to sugar beets. Growers intentions for potatoes are covered in the story on page 12.

The next question, logically is: What will be the probable total production in 1959?

Frankly, no one can be sure, before even seedbed preparation is started in many sections for the spring planted crops. However, some factors are already in evidence: the generally good condition of the winter wheat crop in many heavy producing sections, ample moisture supplies to mid-March in most areas, availability of modern machinery which can often overcome temporary setbacks from inclement weather, and improved seeds and farming skills that have maintained a generally rising yield trend in recent years.

Taking all these factors into consideration, total production will likely fall below the record harvest of 1958, which set new yield-per-acre records for nearly all major crops. But with even breaks in the weather and assuming farmers finally plant about the acreage now expected, total crop production in 1959 should top any year except 1958.

Finally, the Crop Reporting Board wishes to thank every farmer, who by reporting his March 1 intended plantings, made this great service to all farmers possible.

Charles E. Burkhead
James R. Kendall
Agricultural Estimates Division, AMS

Supply of Food Fats And Oils May Go Up

Prospects this spring indicate that the supply of food fats and oils may climb to a new peak in the 1959–60 marketing year which begins next October. Sharp increases in the production of lard and cottonseed oil are in sight, and butter output may remain near this year's level. Total supplies of soybeans including the carryover in 1959–60 are expected to be nearly as large as in 1957–58. Lower production will approximately offset larger stocks at the beginning of the year.

Lard output in 1959–60 may increase 8 to 9 percent above this year, following a sharp rise in 1959 hog production. The 1959 spring pig crop is substantially greater than the 1958 crop, and the fall crop will likely increase.

Cottonseed production in 1959 is expected to increase because most of the 5 million acres placed in the Soil Bank in 1958 will be back in production. Furthermore, the extent to which cotton farmers participate in the plan allowing them to plant more acres than alloted will tend to increase acreage. Unless an unfavorable growing season should result in yields below average, cottonseed production would be the largest since 1953.

Soybean farmers' intentions as of March 1 indicate they plan to plant 23.2 million acres, 7 percent less than last year's record. Decreases from last year are indicated for all States in the "Soybelt," but southern areas plan moderate expansion. The reduction in acreage reflects the 24-cent-per-bushel drop in the 1959 soybean support price along with increased competition from corn and the Conservation Reserve Program.

Peanut growers expect to plant 1.7 million acres in 1959, about 3 percent less than last year. At average yields, production would be more than adequate to meet food and farm uses.

George W. Kromer
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INCREASED SUPPLIES OF CITRUS FRUITS AND JUICES

Supplies of fresh oranges and frozen orange concentrate are expected to be much larger, and prices somewhat lower, this spring and summer than in this period of 1958. More fresh grapefruit at lower prices are also in prospect for this spring. The situation is in contrast with 1958, when supplies had been reduced by freezes in Florida and dry weather in California, and prices rose sharply.

Orange Crop

The 1958–59 crop of oranges was estimated in March at about 123 million boxes, 12 percent larger than the reduced 1957–58 crop, and 3 percent above the 1947–56 average.

Most of the increase is in California. In Florida, an increase in Valencia oranges is offset by a decrease in early and midseason varieties. These 2 Florida orange crops are the smallest since 1952–53.

Production of grapefruit in the United States in 1958–59 is about 43.5 million boxes, up 9 percent from 1957–58, but down 3 percent from the 1947–56 average. Most of increase is in Florida.

This year's California lemon crop of 16.5 million boxes is down 2 percent from 1957–58, but up 24 percent from the 1947–56 average.

Total use of the 1958–59 orange and grapefruit crops in Florida to March 15 lagged considerably behind a year earlier. This lag was due partly to the late maturity of the current crop and to stepped up use of the 1957–58 crop to minimize losses from freeze damage. Moreover, production of Florida grapefruit in 1958–59 is up 13 percent.

Supplies of Florida grapefruit remaining to be marketed after March 15, 1959, were more than triple those of a year earlier, and supplies of Florida oranges were 62 percent larger. These supplies are expected to extend further into spring and summer than last year. Remaining supplies of California oranges also were up sharply, and should be more plentiful throughout spring, summer, and early fall than in this period of 1958.

Carryover stocks of both canned and frozen citrus juices were much smaller at the start of the 1958–59 season than a year earlier. Early-season output of these juices in Florida—where most of them are processed—has been lighter than in 1957–58. As a consequence, supplies have continued smaller and prices higher than in the early part of 1957–58.

The Florida pack of frozen orange concentrate has now passed that of a year earlier, and the season total is expected to be about a fifth larger than the 1957–58 pack. This points to increased supplies and to somewhat lower prices this spring and summer than the unusually high prices in 1958.

Output of most canned single-strength citrus juices continues to lag behind that of a year ago. The season total for orange juice may not reach the heavy volume of 1957–58, when emphasis was put on canning as a means of salvaging the freeze-damaged crop. The totals for most other canned citrus juices may exceed their respective 1957–58 packs.

Consumption

With supplies lighter and prices higher, per capita consumption of frozen orange concentrate dropped moderately in 1958. But the percentage decline in consumption was not as great as the percentage increase in price. Per capita consumption of canned single-strength orange juice increased somewhat despite a small increase in price. Apparently, many consumers now give emphasis to orange juice as a food, much the same as they do to other items usually considered necessities.

Ben H. Pubols
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OUTLOOK

Cotton

Domestic use of cotton continues a little above last year, but exports are running only about half the 1957–58 rate. If disappearance the rest of the season continues at the first-half rate, seasonally adjusted, carryover next August 1 will be about the same as a year earlier.

Wool

Consumption of both apparel and carpet wool in January was far above a year earlier. This year's total also is likely to be up, stimulated by further expanson in economic activity.

Livestock

Prospects that this spring's pig crop will be up about 13 percent from 1958 were reinforced by the pig crop report issued in March. Hog prices probably will hold near current levels for several weeks . . . then begin a seasonal rise.

Generally stable prices for fed cattle are expected for several months. A seasonal rise probably will begin around midsummer. Stockers and feeders probably will continue to show price strength through the spring, and perhaps through the year.

Dairy

Prices to farmers for milk in 1959 may average a little above the $4.13 per hundredweight received in 1958. Dollar-and-cents support levels are the same as in 1958–59. Milk production will rise slightly, but probably not as much as total use. As a result, prices are likely to be above support levels for longer periods than in 1958–59.

Eggs

Laying flock in 1959–60 will be larger than this year if farmers carry out their February intentions. They reported they planned to buy about 1 percent fewer chicks for laying flock replacement than last year, but that a slightly higher proportion would be sexed pullets.

Figures so far indicate that farmers are not buying enough chicks to fulfill their intentions. But egg production is likely to be above a year earlier through 1959 unless farmers raise at least 5 percent fewer chicks for flock replacement than last spring.

Soybeans

Soybean crushings are proceeding at a record clip, supported by strong demand for high protein feeds and edible oils. The year's total is expected to reach a new high of 400 million bushels, 46 million more than in 1957–58. Exports of soybeans are running a little ahead of last season's rate . . . probably will total a record 90 million or more for the season.

Feed

Feed grain prices have been steady or have risen in recent months while byproduct feeds have declined. Feeding ratios are above average for hogs, dairy products, and beef cattle, about average for eggs, and below average for farm chickens and broilers.

BARGES CARRY CORN TO SOUTHEAST BROILERS

Barges play an important part in bringing corn from the North Central States to the broiler industries of the Southeast. They ply the inland waterways shown on the map on the opposite page. The barge traffic is of rather recent origin; 10 years ago it was relatively unimportant.

Statistics from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reveal that between 1947 and 1957 corn receipts at Memphis and Tennessee River ports mushroomed from 55,000 to 879,000 tons. The 1957 receipts were equal to roughly one-fifth of the corn produced in Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia, and enough, if used entirely in broiler rations, to have fed out almost half of the broilers produced in those States.

The expanding poultry and livestock industries of the Southeast created the need for more feed than this region produced. This was particularly true in Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia—the fastest growing broiler region in the United States. Between 1947–49 and 1955–57, grain-consuming animal units in this area increased 29 percent; in the same interval corn production increased only 19 percent.

Prior to the early 1950's, railroads brought in nearly all of the "imported" corn to these States.

Important Developments

But during recent years, two important developments have contributed to a remarkable growth in waterborne corn movement to Memphis, and other barge unloading points on the Mississippi and Tennessee Rivers. One was the navigational improvements made in the inland waterways, particularly the Tennessee Valley Authority development of the Tennessee River. The other was the series of successive increases applied to the rail freight rates on grain and grain products.

Only a limited amount of grain moved up the Tenessee in 1939, the first year the waterway operated. But in the following years, encouraged by TVA and the barge lines, private grain interests rapidly built up grain-handling facilities on the River. During this period Guntersville, Ala., and Chattanooga, Tenn., grew to be important corn-receiving ports.

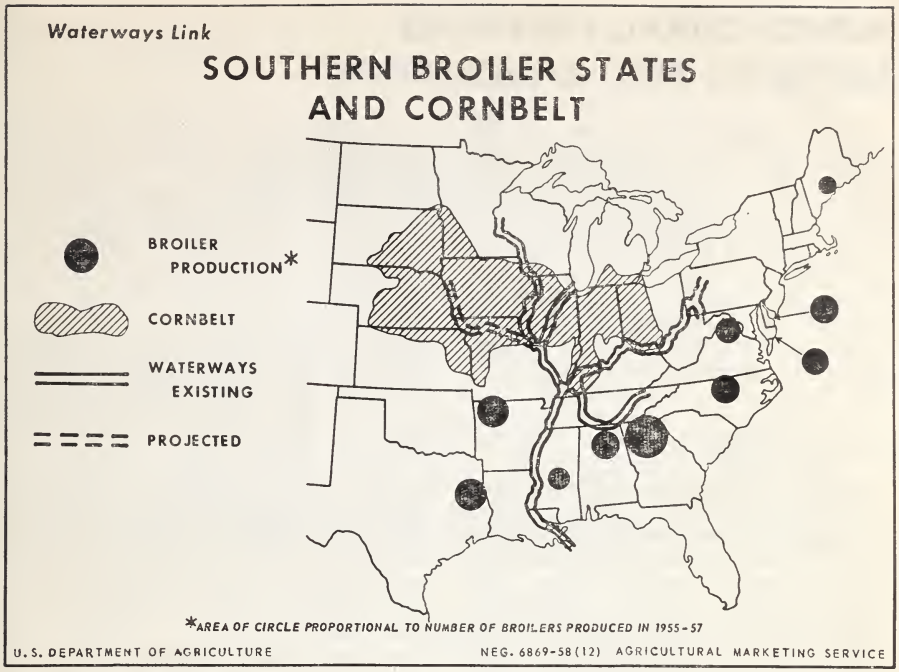
Between 1946 and 1951, annual quantities of corn entering the Tennessee River ranged between 25,000 and 91,000 tons. In the next 6 years, from 1951 through 1957, inbound corn traffic increased in each year except 1956.

Corn Crop

The decline in 1956 was probably in response to the relatively small corn crop in the North Central States in 1955. By 1957 inbound corn movement had swelled to 630,000 tons.

Memphis, Tenn., enjoyed a growth in corn receipts, via the Mississippi River, similar to that of Guntersville and Chattanooga. As recently as 1946, Memphis received only 6,000 tons of corn by barge.

Corn shipments jumped to 81,000 tons in 1949 and to 240,000 tons in 1950. Shipments reached their peak in 1954



at 351,000 tons. Since then they have leveled off to a range of 216,000, to 249,000 tons.

The size of the corn crop in the North Central States appears to have had an important effect on the year-to-year changes in waterborne corn shipments to the Southeast. In years when Corn Belt production was greater than the average of the preceding 3 years, sharp increases occurred in corn movement by barge in the following year. Relatively large corn crops in 1948, 1949, 1952, and 1956 preceded large increases in waterborne shipments in 1949, 1950, 1953, and 1957.

Year-to-year increases in waterborne corn movement were also associated with short corn crops in Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia. Two particularly short crops occurred in 1952 and 1954. A large spurt in corn shipments to southeastern ports occurred in 1953, but only moderate increase occurred in 1955, following the short 1954 crop, when only an average-size crop was harvested in the Midwest.

Corn prices declined more than one-third in Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia between 1945–47 and 1955–57. Corn prices in these States have dropped substantially faster than in the important broiler States of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia, and slightly faster than in the Corn Belt States of Illinois and Iowa. Average prices received by farmers for corn from September through the following January have been used to make these comparisons.

These price trends suggest that the cost of moving corn from the Corn Belt to the Southeast has not increased as much in the last 10 years as the cost of moving corn from the Corn Belt to the important northern broiler States mentioned above.

Most of the corn moves on the waterways in the last half of the crop year, April to September. During this period corn in the Midwest usually sells at its greatest discount relative to corn in the Southeast.

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AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS DIFFER IN THE SOVIET UNION

As you might expect, the crop reporting system in Russia is quite different from ours. Their organization closely corresponds to their centrally directed economy. If you can visualize a society in which the entire ownership of the economy and responsibility for management are vested in one central controlling group, you begin to realize the complexity of the mechanism of the Soviet statistical organization.

Sources of Data

There are two broad sources of statistical data in the U.S.S.R. One is the usual censuses and samples conducted from time to time by government statistical agencies, much the same as is done in the United States. The second is a unique system of huge, complicated, and centralized record keeping and reporting which embraces nearly everyone and everything in the field of agriculture.

In the U.S.S.R., statistics arising primarily from continuous, complete reporting are far more important than in other countries. Such reporting may be based on regular periodic reports of production, inventory numbers, or permanent bookkeeping and accounting.

Primary records are kept at all farms, elevators, markets, slaughter plants, and so forth. Their records are regulated by law.

All are obliged to keep records and to make periodic reports in accordance with centrally established rules, forms, and definitions. The detailed formulation of these rules and definitions, the fixing of the date of reports, and the channel through which reports flow is primarily the responsibility of the Central Statistical Administration.

The statistical agencies of the U.S.S.R. represent a very elaborate and far-reaching organization. The controlling body is the Central Statistical Administration, with headquarters in Moscow. This body is directly subordinated to the Council of Ministers of the U.S.S.R. The CSA is aided by statistical administrations of each of the constituent republics. Below this level are nearly 200 statistical administrations of autonomous republics and provinces, with which the CSA has authority to communicate directly.

At the base of this rather impressive statistical pyramid are some 6,000 district and municipal statistical offices which directly oversee the work of primary reporting on farms and in the towns and villages.

The farflung statistical organization along with the mandatory reporting requirements provides a vehicle for securing any desired agricultural data and impresses the fact that the Soviets must possess unusually complete statistical data.

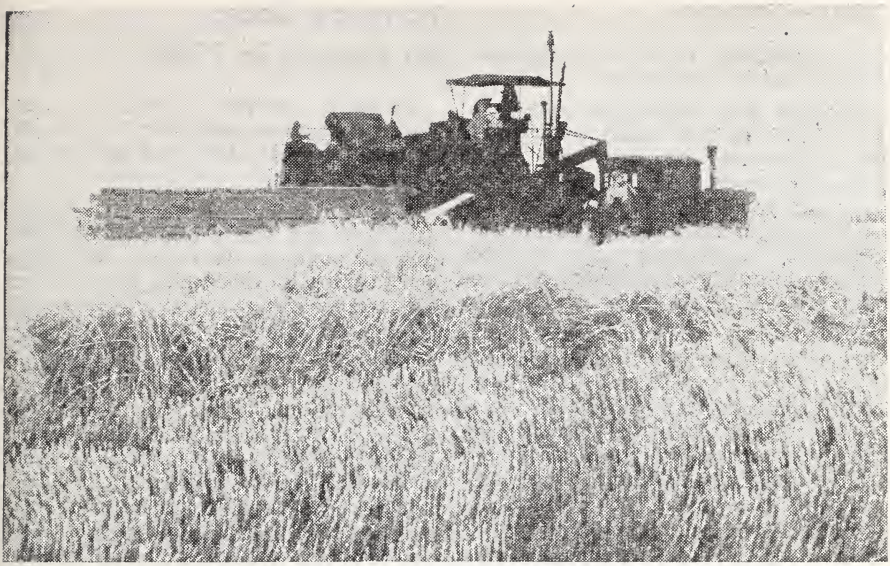
However, the reliability of some of the data may at times be questioned. Discussion with persons responsible for reporting, as well as those administratively responsible, revealed severe consequences associated with detection of data falsification.

Agricultural statistical data at the farm level and even at the district or regional level are discussed with apparent freedom. Information is readily supplied in response to inquiries relating to acreage, yield, production, price, and inventory numbers.

National Policy

At the national level, however, there is a policy of not publishing estimates for several major agricultural commodities. It should be noted, however, that during recent years there has been a gradual increase in the amount and extent of data published. Toward the end of 1958, the official estimates of total grain crops and of wheat, long held confidential, were published.

Unlike the United States, reports are not published on a regular basis. Many series of statistical data are quite fragmentary. Data having relatively good



This 16-foot combine was operating on a collective farm visited by a USDA group in Russia last summer. The combine, pulled by a 54-horsepower tractor, is operated by five people. The wheat being harvested is a hard red winter variety which stands about 4 feet high. Heads are somewhat shorter than U.S. varieties. The farm director said that the field would yield 72 bushels an acre.

continuity would include number of farms, crop acreages, livestock numbers, and agricultural machinery inventories.

The process of assembling agricultural statistics begins on each farm. Farms are required to submit monthly and seasonal reports for certain items, and an annual report covering all phases of agriculture.

Number of Reports

It should be noted that obtaining reports from each farm does not involve a particularly large number of reports. There were only 76,500 collective farms and 5,900 state farms, or a total of 82,400 farms, on January 1, 1958. This compares with nearly 4.8 million farms in the United States.

Acreages to be devoted to each crop for each farm are decided well in advance of planting time. Each farm is required to submit a production plan for the coming year which includes the acreage to be devoted to each crop produced on the farm. Such plans are submitted through administrative channels and either approved or modified. Modifications are sometimes necessary to insure production balance within the U.S.S.R. for the various commodities.

During the planting season, each farm submits a report every fifth day showing the acreage planted to date. At the end of the planting season, a final planted acreage report is submitted through the Central Statistical Administrations of the districts and provinces.

Production Estimates

Crop production reports are prepared during the growing season. The early season estimates of production are based on a combination of objective yield sampling and personal observation. The first production estimate for fall-sown small grains is prepared as of June 1 with the initial estimate for spring-sown grains related to July 1.

Each farm submits a second production estimate after the first few fields of grain are harvested. The third and

(*continued on the next page*)

final production report is submitted with the annual farm report.

The first two production estimates are subject to the usual recognized sampling errors. However, the final production report should represent actual field production as all grain is weighed across the scales as harvested. Subsequent losses may occur due to cleaning, handling, and storing, but the magnitude of such losses should be known.

The publication of so-called biological preharvest estimates of crop production, without taking into account harvest or weather losses which led to gross exaggeration of production statistics, was officially abandoned in 1953.

Livestock Estimates

Livestock inventories generally relate to January 1 and are based on a census which includes state-farm-owned, collective-owned, and privately owned livestock and poultry. Monthly estimates of milk and egg production are based on reports submitted monthly by each collective and state farm.

Only a small sample, 2 to 3 percent, is used for estimating milk production of privately owned cows. The private holdings comprise a very significant portion of all cows. The small sample reporting leaves an opportunity for significant errors to occur that would greatly affect the production at the national level.

John W. Kirkbride
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The author spent a month in Russia last summer as a member of a USDA agricultural observer group. The six-man group studied the economic and statistical aspects of agriculture in the Soviet Union. They visited experiment stations, collective and state farms, crop-handling facilities, and other agricultural developments in several areas.

The supply of canned fruits during the first half of 1959 is likely to be below a year ago, and prices are expected to run generally higher.

Farmer's Share 40 Percent in 1958

Farmers received 40 cents of each dollar consumers spent for farm foods in retail stores in 1958, the same as in 1957 and 1956.

The marketing margin—the difference between the retail cost of food and the payment the farmer receives—was higher in 1958 than in 1957 for all food groups.

The increases in the marketing margin in 1958 reflected higher marketing costs. Costs of most goods and services used in marketing operations were higher in 1958 than in 1957. Hourly earnings of food-marketing employees averaged about 4 percent higher. Available data indicate that total profits of food-marketing firms were larger in 1958 than in 1957. Rail freight rates for farm products averaged about 4 percent higher.

The farmer's share of the consumer's food dollar went up from 38 percent last December to 39 percent in January 1959. In January 1958 it was 40 percent.

Recent USDA Publications

Marketing Costs and Margins for Fresh Milk. MP 733. 16 pages.

This popular publication provides a brief description of the marketing of fresh (or fluid) milk, of the cost of performing the various marketing operations, and of variations in these costs and in the price spread between farmers and consumers.

Grade Names Used in U.S. Standards for Farm Products. AH–157. 30 pages.

This publication lists grade names for all of the agricultural products for which U.S. standards have been issued.

You may obtain a free copy of these publications by writing to the Office of Information, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D.C.

REALIZED NET FARM INCOME WENT UP 20 PERCENT IN 1958

Realized net income—the amount farmers have available after they've paid their production expenses—rose to $13.1 billion in 1958. This was an increase of $2.2 billion, or 20 percent, from 1957.

The increase in realized net income last year reflected an increase of 11 percent in realized gross farm income, which was only partly offset by higher production expenses.

In 1958, realized net income per farm increased in 39 States. The increases reflected, for the most part, higher cash receipts from cattle as a result of higher prices, and exceptionally large marketings of wheat, sorghum grain, corn, tobacco, and soybeans.

Among the 39 States registering increases, Kansas scored the largest gain—242 percent—as it recovered from a poor year in 1957. Increases of 20 percent or more occurred in 18 States; 10 percent to 19 percent, in 11 States; and up to 10 percent in 10 States. In nine States, realized net income per farm was below 1957.

Farmers' production expenses continued to rise in all States except Vermont. The largest increases occurred in expenditures for feed, livestock, and hired labor. Most other items of expense also rose. The higher production costs reflected generally higher prices, and increased quantities of most goods and services used in production.

Total net income—realized net income plus the increase in crop and livestock inventories—was $14.2 billion in the United States in 1958, up $2.6 billion, or 22 percent, from 1957. The substantial net accumulation of inventories in 1958 was mostly due to an increase in livestock numbers.

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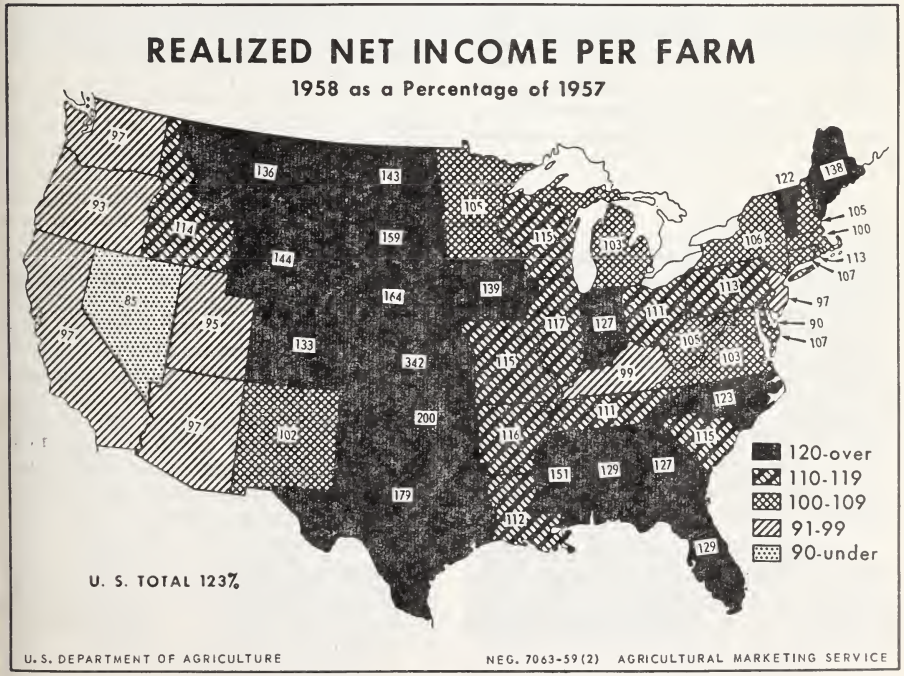

GROWERS PLAN TO CUT LATE POTATO ACREAGE

Growers intend to put fewer acres in late summer and fall potatoes this year. Their intentions to plant, as reported about March 1, are placed at 1,087,200 acres, 4 percent less than in 1958, but 1 percent more than in 1957.

Of the 33 late summer and fall producing States, 2 States indicated larger acreage in 1959 than in 1958, 5 States the same acreage, and 26 States less acreage. The Eastern States show a 6-percent decline, the Central States 4 percent, and the Western States 2 percent.

In the Eastern States, growers in Vermont and Massachusetts reported no change from last year. Other States, including Maine, New York, and Pennsylvania, indicated reductions ranging from 4 to 9 percent. In the Central States, Minnesota and Iowa are planning to have the same acreage as in 1958, while reductions of from 1 to 10 percent are indicated in the other States.

In the Western States, growers in Idaho plan to plant 2 percent more acreage in 1959 than in 1958. Other western growers are planning to reduce their acreage, ranging from 4 percent in Colorado to 31 percent in New Mexico.

Other Intentions

On February 1, growers reported intentions to plant 96,400 acres for the early summer crop, 11 percent below 1958 acreage. In January, growers of the late spring acreage were planning to have 156,100 acres, 15 percent below last year. For the early spring crop, growers have planted 25,800 acres, down 21 percent from 1958. Growers are expected to harvest a winter crop of 26,800 acres, 30 percent below 1958.

If growers plant their present intentions of late spring, early summer, late summer, and fall acreage, the total for all potatoes will be 1,392,300 acres, 7 percent below 1958.

If growers of late summer and fall potatoes carry out their intentions to plant and if the average 1954–58 yields by States are realized, a late summer and fall crop of 192 million hundredweight will be harvested. This is 11 percent below 1958 production, but 1 percent above 1957.

However, in recent years the trend of yields per acre has been upward. If this trend continues in 1959, a crop of about 250 million hundredweight could be harvested, only 5 percent below 1958 production.

If the 1954–58 average yields are obtained by States on the total acres indicated for 1959, a production af about 233 million hundredweight would be harvested. Adjusting this for recent upward trends in yields would indicate a possible production of 248 million hundredweight.

Acreage Guides

USDA has published 1959 Acreage-Marketing Guides for each seasonal group. If growers of late summer and fall potatoes plant their present intentions, they will exceed the guides by 8 percent. Growers in 13 late summer and fall States indicated plantings will be below the guides. In one State they will be the same. In the remaining 25 States, growers expect to exceed the guide.

Wisconsin is the only major producing State in the late summer and fall group in which growers indicate less acreage than recommended by the Department. In the other major producing States, the intended plantings exceed the guides from 2 to 20 percent. Growers of early summer and late spring potatoes indicated intentions below the Department marketing guides. Early spring potato producers planted 1 percent more acreage than indicated by the guides, while growers of winter potatoes planted less.

Oakley M. Frost
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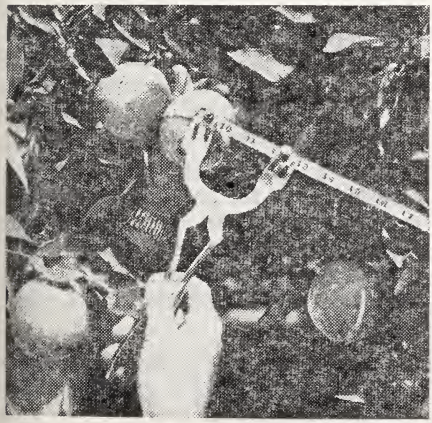
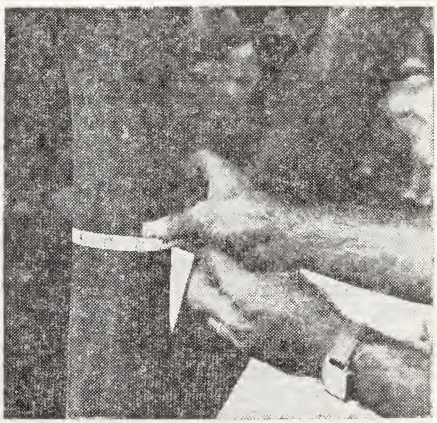
FORECASTING FLORIDA CITRUS PRODUCTION

These Florida statisticians are using objective measurements to forecast the yield of an orange tree long before harvest. By finding the circumference of all limbs, and then counting the oranges on a sample limb, the statisticians can estimate the number of oranges on the tree. This fruit count, together with the estimated number of trees and monthly measurements of fruit size and droppage, provides an indication of production in the State. This is but one of the numerous methods used by the Crop and Livestock Reporting Service to forecast citrus production in Florida.



Special calipers are used to measure oranges.



Limb circumferences are measured with a tape.

HOGS ON FARMS MARCH 1 UP 12 PERCENT FROM 1958

Farmers in 9 North Central States had 37.4 million hogs and pigs on farms March 1. The States—Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas—accounted for 67 percent of the U.S. pig crop in 1958.

The number of head on farms March 1, based on the March Pig Crop Report, was 12 percent more than the 33.5 million head a year earlier, but 11 percent less than the 41.9 million head on December 1, 1958.

The decrease from December 1 reflects the seasonally large slaughter of hogs since that date, and the light farrowings in the winter quarter relative to other seasons of the year. Total commercial slaughter of hogs for the United States during December 1958 and January 1959 was 5 percent more than a year earlier. Federally inspected slaughter during February was 27 percent larger than in February 1958.

Hogs and pigs 6 months old and over on March 1 totaled 12.6 million—9 percent more than a year earlier. There was a 15-percent increase in the number of pigs 3 to 6 months old on March 1, compared with an increase of 16 percent in the number of pigs under 3 months old on December 1, 1958.

Winter Farrowings

The number of pigs under 3 months of age was 11 percent above a year earlier. This increase reflects the 12-percent increase in the number of sows which farrowed pigs during the December through February period. Farmers' reports indicate that most of this increase is sow farrowings occurred during December and January, which have been relatively light months. February farrowings were about the same as in 1958.

A decrease in litter size for the December–February period as compared with a year earlier is indicated with a decline in the Western Corn Belt States more than offsetting small increases in the Eastern Corn Belt States.

Sows bred and intended for farrowing in March, April, and May this year totaled 3.7 million head, 9 percent more than a year earlier, but 20 percent less than average. This is 1 percent, or 51,000 head, more than the farrowing intentions reported in December. All nine States show increases from a year earlier for this period.

Total Spring Crop

The number of sows farrowed and intended to farrow from December 1958 through May 1959 was 10 percent larger than in the spring of 1958, but 1 percent less than the 1948–57 average. The number was estimated at 5.6 million head as of March 1. Increases range from 4 percent in Wisconsin to 16 percent in both South Dakota and Kansas.

An increase of 15 percent was indicated in Nebraska, 13 percent in Minnesota, 10 percent in Illinois, 9 percent in Iowa, and 8 percent in both Ohio and Indiana. The March 1 survey indicated a decrease of less than 1 percent or 13,000 head, from the spring farrowing intentions reported for these States as of December 1, 1958.

Reported intentions indicate 2.3 million sows to farrow during the 1959 summer quarter—June through August. This would be an increase of 9 percent, or 195,000 head, from the 2.1 million head that farrowed during the same period a year earlier, and 39 percent more than average.

Farmers in Kansas reported 2 percent less sows for 1959 summer farrow than a year earlier. No change from 1958 was indicated in Nebraska. All other States showed increases ranging from 2 percent in Indiana to 21 percent in South Dakota.

E. B. Hannawald
R. M. Pallesen
Agricultural Estimates Division, AMS

"Bert" Newell's Letter

There's a man who comes along our street about once a week selling eggs mostly, but in season he'll have sweet corn, tomatoes, apples, or some other produce, and if you let him know in advance he'll bring you a roasting chicken.

This is just about the simplest form of marketing there is. It's the farmer direct to the consumer wherein the farmer gets 100 percent of the consumer's dollar. Of course, he does have some marketing expense in the form of gas, oil, tires, and depreciation on his car. But I understood his packaging costs are at a minimum because the folks save the egg cartons and give them back to him for reuse.

When I was a kid, father used to get cornmeal from a local mill because he claimed water-ground meal was better. That was a pretty simple, one-step marketing operation too.

All of this gives me a case of nostalgia and sometimes a longing for the "good ole days." But can you imagine trying to feed some 175 million people by these simple processes.

Well, it all means that we have to have a complicated scheme of production and distribution to get everybody fed and clothed. The more efficient the machinery for getting these products from the farm to the consumer, the better for everyone.

Now one of the important marketing costs is uncertainty. For example, a farmer in Maryland told me he had been offered a price for his red clover seed. He wanted to know how much seed was available, where it was, and what sort of prices producers elsewhere were getting. Without that information he wouldn't know whether to accept or reject the offer.

On the other hand, if the buyer didn't know the supply situation he would certainly be cautious. So lack of knowledge creates an uncertainty on both sides and this results in inefficient and expensive marketing.

Briefly, the primary function of the Agricultural Marketing Service is to facilitate and improve the entire process usually referred to as marketing.

Various divisions of this Service study the marketing system, prepare outlook and situation reports (there was a good article in last month's *Situation* on this subject), furnish market news reports, operate the extensive grading and inspection services, and administer regulatory laws to insure "fairplay" in the marketplace.

Yes, the Agricultural Marketing Service touches almost every phase in the long and complicated process—from the time a crop is planted until your wife or mine picks up the product at the retail store.

Each person in the long chain benefits from these services whether they realize it or not. Without these services, the situation would become chaotic and there would be a lot of hungry people in this land of ours.

I know my farmer who delivers eggs looked over the market news report, or at least read the store ads, to decide on prices. But behind that market report is the vast and complex marketing system.

As huge and as complex as the distribution problem is, we know we have to start with the basic facts on *what, how much,* and *where* the supply of any given product is located. It is these basic facts that the Crop Reporting Board supplies. These statistics, by themselves, will not guarantee orderly production and marketing, but it is a lead-pipe cinch that an orderly system would be impossible without them.

S. R. Newell
Chairman, Crop Reporting Board, AMS

In This Issue

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